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THE CENTURY CO

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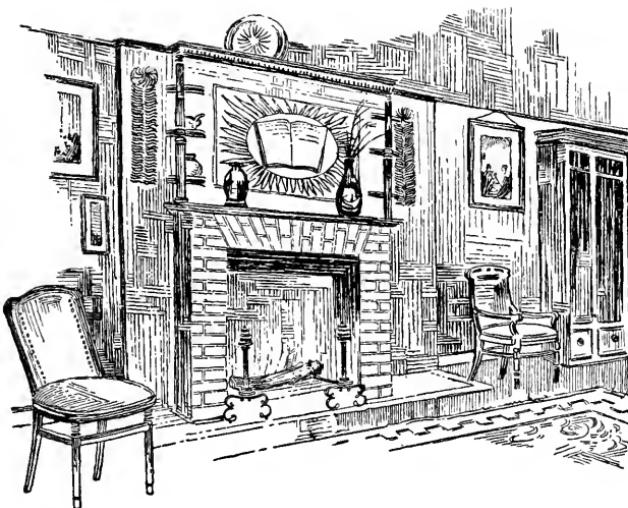
We published our first magazine in 1870. The modest offices then occupied were located at 654 Broadway, New York, on the third floor. We had no elevators

*The
Story*

1875



Within five years we had outgrown our "log-cabin" home. Pleasanter offices were secured at 743 Broadway, opposite Astor Place. There we occupied two entire floors—the third and fourth



In September, 1881, still another move was deemed necessary, in view of the growth of **CENTURY** interests. We found new quarters that were truly sumptuous for the period. Architecturally speaking, the building was the finest on Union Square. The fifth floor alone, which we occupied, was equal in area to an eight-story building covering an ordinary city lot. We had the advantage of central location united with the verdure and sunshine of a beautiful park. This was our home for thirty-four years

40
Ann

1915



*The
Story*

We have now moved still farther north—to 353 Fourth Avenue, where we occupy the whole top floor. You will always find a cordial welcome here and an easy arm-chair to rest in. Come and see us

*The
Story*



353 Fourth Avenue at 26th street

Entire Top (12th) Floor



1870



1881



1915

*The
Story*

CENTURY COVERS, 1870-1915. The magazine was known as "Scribner's Monthly" until October, 1881. The last number before the change in name had the words "The Century" in red across the cover.

The Century Co.'s New Offices



HEN The Century Co. moved "up" into Union Square in 1881, the city of New York contained only a few more than a million people, and the era of "Greater New York," with its five million inhabitants, was far in the future. The company's building was "lofty" in those days; at least it towered over everything near, and dominated the north side of Union Square. For neighbors it had Tiffany & Co., diagonally across the square, Brentano's book-store, and many other well-known business houses. Next door to The Century Co.'s office was the Everett House, for many years the temporary abiding-place of that army of distinguished foreigners brought over to America by the late Major Pond, prince of lecture managers. The major had



When The Century Co. moved to Union Square. View made in 1881, from the northeast corner of the square, looking west. The Century Co.'s offices are on the fifth floor of the tallest building.

his office in the Everett House, and it was his custom to bring in to *The Century* offices most of what he called his "talent," which included Anthony Hope, Henry M. Stanley, Conan Doyle, the English Winston Churchill, and scores of other men famous in many walks of life. Around the corner was the Clarendon Hotel, where Clara Louise Kellogg used to live when in New York, an important hostelry back in the days of Thackeray, who made it his home when he gave readings in America in the winter of 1854-55.

The square itself was a peaceful spot. No trolleys or automobiles disturbed its quiet. A line of horse-cars ran on the Fourth Avenue side, but it was some years after 1881 that Jacob Sharp managed to put his horse-car tracks down Broadway. Later these made way for the "cable" cars, and these were in turn supplanted by trolleys, with power under-



The same building shown in picture on the opposite page, in December, 1914.

ground. To-day the Broadway subway is under construction, and the green square is half a scar in consequence. The subway has been running for years under Fourth Avenue. Tiffany and Brentano have gone uptown, and of the important publishers only Harper & Bros., in Franklin Square, and the Macmillan Company, on Fifth Avenue at Thirteenth Street, remain below Union Square. The Everett House has been replaced by a tall mercantile building. Babies and nursemaids are seldom seen now in Union Square, but the benches are occupied by derelicts, and the walks have become a crowded pathway at certain hours of the day when the multitudes employed in the clothing manufactories on lower Fifth Avenue go back and forth to their homes on the East Side.

The Century Co. began its life at 654 Broadway, then

moved to 743 Broadway, and now, after thirty-four years of Union Square (which breaks into Broadway at about number 850), it joins the uptown procession, not going very far, but to the colony of publishers which are making Fourth Avenue the Fleet Street of New York. Into the same district have come many of the houses from the old dry-goods quarter, Worth and Reade Streets and thereabouts, so that the avenue is being given over to both kinds of business, publishing and dry-goods—the American Woolen Co. and Cheney Brothers cheek by jowl with the McClure publications and the *Woman's Home Companion*. The building into which The Century Co. moved in January, 1915, is No. 353 Fourth Avenue, occupying the space between Twenty-fifth and Twenty-sixth Streets, with an armory in the rear, which fills all the rest of the block to Lexington Avenue. As the armory is low, the light in this building is from all four sides. The company has the twelfth floor, a space so large that all its business and editorial departments are on one level.

When The Century Co. moved to Union Square in September, 1881, the name of the company had just been changed from Scribner & Co., and the name of its chief publication, *The Century Magazine*, had been *Scribner's Monthly* up to the issue of the number for November, 1881, the first number to appear from the new offices in Union Square. A change in the name of the company and of the magazine seemed rather a serious matter to contemplate in advance, but it was made with hardly a ripple. An unforeseen change, which came at the same time, was brought about by the sudden death of Dr. J. G. Holland, who had been the editor of the magazine from its foundation. He died October 12, 1881, and Richard Watson Gilder, who had been associated with Dr. Holland from the first, became

editor-in-chief, a position which he held, in love and honor, until his death in 1909.

The Century Magazine began as the joint enterprise of Roswell Smith and Dr. Holland. Dr. Holland, author of "Timothy Titcomb's Letters" and the popular long poems, "Katrina" and "Bitter-Sweet," lived in Springfield, Mass., where he was associated with Samuel Bowles on the Springfield "Republican." Roswell Smith, a man of New England birth and bringing up, had been a lawyer in Lafayette, Indiana, and had resolved to come to New York and buy or found a newspaper. They and their families were traveling together in Europe in 1869. One moonlight night, on a Geneva bridge, Dr. Holland outlined to Roswell Smith his idea of a new American magazine, one which should take a foremost place in art and literature, and to which he, Dr. Holland, should contribute the lay sermons which he could preach so well, messages of uplift to American men and women. This was the beginning of *Scribner's Monthly*, later *The Century*. Mr. Charles Scribner, founder of the Scribner house, took an interest in the new venture, with Roswell Smith and Dr. Holland, and the joint-stock company of "Scribner & Co." was formed, and the magazine named in honor of Mr. Scribner, who did not live to see its great success. Roswell Smith became the business head of the new project, a position which he occupied until his death in 1893.

From the first it was the belief of the conductors of *The Century* that a periodical to be really great should not only cultivate American literature in fiction and in poetry, but should treat freely all questions in a non-partizan spirit. The nation was then only just recovering from the Civil War. One of the first enterprises undertaken by the magazine was to send a writer, with an artist, through the



The Century Building (in the center of the block at the left) at the time (April, 1889) of the Centennial Celebration of Washington's Inauguration as first President of the United States. President Harrison is in the four-horse carriage.

The Everett House is just beyond the Century Building. Taken at the corner of Broadway and Seventeenth Street, looking east.

Southern States to prepare a series of articles entitled "The Great South," and Mr. Edward King, a young Northern journalist, and the artist J. Wells Champney, were selected for this important service. It has always been the policy of the magazine to give a generous welcome to writers representing widely different sentiments. In an early number, for instance, we find articles on John Brown by a Virginian and by Frank B. Sanborn of Massachusetts. But the most conspicuous example of its attitude was presented by the War Series, which was begun in 1884, and continued for two years, in which were presented articles on the great battles and campaigns of the Civil War, contributed by leaders on both sides, a most important service to the nation, and



The same view as the one shown on the opposite page, in December, 1914. The Everett House has been replaced by a tall mercantile building. The Germania Life Insurance building is beyond. In the foreground are evidences of the Broadway subway excavation.

one which would have been impossible of accomplishment if it had been delayed. This was unquestionably the most valuable and successful series ever undertaken by a magazine. It was followed by the authorized "Life of Lincoln," written by Mr. Lincoln's private secretaries, Messrs. Nicolay and Hay. And at a later day, when the Spanish War occurred, the leaders contributed their narratives to *The Century*, the remarkable "Story of the Captains" being one of the great magazine hits of the time.

We have grown so accustomed to magazines as they are to-day that it is hard to realize that *The Century* was the pioneer in printing the name of the writer of a story or an article with the contribution. In periodicals the names of

the authors were given only in the table of contents before *The Century* began this innovation,—and oftener names were not published at all. *The Century* was also the pioneer in the field of magazine advertising. The idea that business men would advertise between the covers of a literary magazine was pooh-poohed by the older publishers; but a brief experience very soon proved the falsity of their theories, and to-day magazine advertising is a great business in itself and has made possible many of the cheaper magazines, which could not have existed without this advertising.

Wood-engraving, except as exemplified in the work of Timothy Cole and a few other masters of the burin, has become a thing of the past, but through its improvements in the field of wood-engraving, *The Century* brought about a new era in illustrating. In 1870 “engravings” always meant engravings on steel. Those on wood were contemptuously called “cuts,” and were conventional to the last degree. The method in vogue was for a middleman to transfer the work of the artist to the smooth side of a wood block, which was then cut by the engraver. But no middleman could reproduce the individuality of the artist who drew the picture. *The Century* was the first to *photograph* the original drawing on the wood, and the engraver did his work with the complete original drawing constantly before him. Conventional lines for water and foliage had to be abandoned, and the technic of the artist, his very tricks of painting, began to appear on the printed page. Thus was born the American School of Engraving, and for years it led the world. The London *Saturday Review* said of it: “The impartial critic who is asked where the best woodcuts are produced has, we fear, but one answer possible—neither in England, Germany nor France, but in America.”

The efforts of *The Century* in the cause of art were not

confined to improvements in wood-engraving. It devoted a large part of its space—and in those days art had hardly entered into American life—to papers upon art topics, such as Clarence Cook's on Leonardo da Vinci, James Jackson Jarves's on American Museums of Art, Mr. Scudder's on William Blake, Painter and Poet. The name of Jean François Millet is a household word to-day, but *The Century* printed the first article that had ever appeared in an American magazine on the great French peasant-painter.

The Century has led in music, just as it has in art. Its series of articles by great musicians on other great musicians included contributions by Gounod, Grieg, Mascagni, Leoncavallo, and Saint-Saëns. It first recognized the greatness of Paderewski, and introduced him to America in an article which appeared before his arrival in this country.

No magazine has treated the stage so fully; besides William Winter's recently printed reminiscences, *The Century* gave place to the autobiography of Joseph Jefferson, to Salvini's recollections, Edwin Booth's letters, and articles by Modjeska, Stoddard, Forbes-Robertson, and many other leaders of the stage.

The second great project of The Century Co. was the publication of *St. Nicholas*, that famous magazine for young folks, which is now giving to its third American generation the very best in current literature and art that brains can furnish and money pay for. As in the old days the greatest writers of the time were among its contributors, Tennyson, Longfellow, Whittier, Louisa M. Alcott, Frank Stockton, Trowbridge, Edward Eggleston,—Kipling's "Jungle Stories" were written for *St. Nicholas*,—so to-day the best authors of our times are writing for it. This year's most important serial is "The Lost Prince" by Frances Hodgson Burnett, one of the most charming stories that this great

writer for old and young has ever produced. The grown-ups of to-day may remember that Mrs. Burnett's famous "Little Lord Fauntleroy" was first printed serially in *St. Nicholas* when those same grown-ups were among the vast army that watched with eagerness for the day of the magazine's arrival. In its editorial policy *St. Nicholas* has always held to a judicious commingling of the practical with the fanciful, stories with a purpose and articles that are descriptive and educational as well as fairy-tales and nonsense-verses, with plenty of space for stories of adventure and of sentiment. It has been one of the greatest educational influences America has ever had. As Charles Dudley Warner said years ago, "If the children don't like *St. Nicholas*, it is time to change the kind of children in this country." Well, the children *did* like it, but perhaps its lessons of happiness and helpfulness have helped more than a little to change the kind of children.

Soon after the company moved to Union Square, it purchased from the Scottish publishers, Messrs. Blackie & Son of Glasgow, the American market of the Imperial Dictionary, and from that purchase developed the greatest literary enterprise ever undertaken in America—The Century Dictionary. It began with the thought of making a few changes in the Imperial and adapting it to American readers; but soon the Imperial was laid aside, and an entirely new dictionary of the English language was begun, under the able editorship of Professor William Dwight Whitney of Yale University, assisted by a great corps of experts. Circular letters were sent throughout the world, wherever the English language is used, asking for new words, new definitions, and new illustrations of the uses of words. When completed, it was not a compilation from other books, but an absolutely new dictionary, made from original



The Century Co.'s new offices are on the top floor of the large building in the center, occupying the block between Twenty-sixth and Twenty-fifth streets, on Fourth Avenue. This view is from the west corner of Twenty-seventh Street, looking south. The projection at the right covers the Fourth Avenue entrance to the Madison Square Garden.

sources. It has had frequent revision and thus has been kept up to date during the quarter-century of its completed existence.

Ever since 1879, thousands of churches have looked to The Century Co. as the source of supply of their best hymn- and tune-books. Beginning with the Rev. Dr. Charles S. Robinson's remarkably successful compilations, the company has gone on making new books from time to time. "The American Hymnal," issued five years ago, is the leading all-round book of the day. A smaller volume, entitled "The Church Hymnal," has just been issued, and is being adopted by scores of churches every week. The company

has never issued a hymn- and tune-book which was not up to a high standard in respect to the quality of its hymns and tunes.

Its special “educational book” department includes on its list many of the important higher text-books of the day, Alexander Smith’s chemistries, Forman’s histories and civics, Thorndike’s Rhetoric, Century Readings in English Literature, a very popular series of supplemental readers made from *St. Nicholas*, etc.

The company’s great general book business is the result of a steady growth that began just before its removal to Union Square with the issue of “The Great South,” made from Edward King’s *Century* papers, and of “Baby Days,” containing the best material for very little folks that had appeared in *St. Nicholas*. One of its early book successes was “St. Nicholas Songs,” music written by famous composers for St. Nicholas verses. “Baby Days” and “St. Nicholas Songs” are still among the great sellers. In fact it is astonishing how many books on The Century Co.’s list, whose publication dates are far back, continue to sell year after year, especially its remarkable “juveniles” which have come to it from first publication in *St. Nicholas*. It has a general list of not more than six hundred titles, but it is said to have a larger proportion of “live” titles on that list than any other American publishing house.

In biography and statecraft it has published such works of permanent interest and value as Prof. William M. Sloane’s “Napoleon Bonaparte: a History,” with many illustrations in color by leading French artists; George Kennan’s “Siberia and the Exile System”; John Morley’s “Oliver Cromwell”; Joseph H. Choate’s “American Addresses”; Andrew D. White’s “Autobiography” and “Seven Great Statesmen”; Nicolay and Hay’s authorized life of

Lincoln, and a number of other books on Lincoln. Its books of exceptional appeal from the art side include special and *de luxe* editions of Timothy Cole's Engravings, and Charles H. Caffin's reviews of "Dutch," "French," and "Spanish Paintings," and his "How to Study Pictures"; several of Arthur Rackham's books; "French Cathedrals" by Joseph and Elizabeth Robins Pennell; Mrs. Van Rensselaer's "English Cathedrals," with Pennell's pictures; Edith Wharton's "Italian Gardens," with illustrations by Maxfield Parrish; "The Châteaux of Touraine" by Maria Lansdale; and Robert Hichens's famous books on "Egypt," "The Holy Land," and "The Near East," with their superb illustrations in color by Jules Guérin.

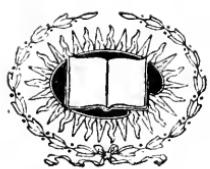
In the line of fiction and books of the popular order, many of those on the list of The Century Co. have promptly won their way to the front rank of "best sellers," as instanced by Alice Hegan Rice's "Mrs. Wiggs of the Cabbage Patch"; Dr. S. Weir Mitchell's "Hugh Wynne"; Kipling's "Jungle Books" and "Captains Courageous"; Frances Little's "Lady of the Decoration"; John Luther Long's "Madame Butterfly"; Eleanor Hallowell Abbott's "Molly Make-Believe"; and Mrs. Burnett's "T. Tembarom," besides Theodore Roosevelt's "Ranch Life and the Hunting Trail" and Ernest Thompson Seton's "Biography of a Grizzly," and—among juveniles—the ever-popular "Brownie Books."

TIMES change, and to be successful we must change with them. To-day the world is thinking more about the present and the possibilities of the future than it is thinking of the past. The Great War is the absorbing topic of the hour, and a magazine like *The Century* must cover it, but in its own way. The papers, daily and weekly, can best tell the story of battles and sieges, but it remains for such a periodical as

The Century to tell of the causes behind war and to place before its readers the thoughts of wise men who can peer into the future. And there is a changing fashion in literature. The average short story of from twenty to forty years ago would not be enjoyed to-day. Poetry, too, must reflect the hour. Readers of *The Century* in 1915 may be sure that its pages will present the best in the literature and art of the crowded year in which they are living.



The first and the latest ST. NICHOLAS cover.



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